AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

A complete list of all the presently or formerly pending claims in the application is provided below, with suitable headings to show the status of each claim and, where appropriate, its current text. Because Applicant's proposed amendments in the paper filed July 11, 2007, have been entered by the Advisory action, the amendments in this paper are compared to the claims filed on July 11, 2007.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) In a gaming system comprising a plurality of gaming machines and a first database located in a central authority and arranged to store (i) input data to be sent to one or more of the plurality of gaming machines to keep said one or more gaming machines operational and (ii) output data generated by the plurality of gaming machines, apparatus for providing data storage and communications between the gaming machines and the first database comprising:

a network; and

a data processing unit spaced apart from the first database and comprising:

a second database; and

a programmed hardware configured (1) to poll the gaming machines to obtain the output data generated by the gaming machines over the network, (2) to store said output data in the second database, (3) to transmit said output data over the network to the first database from the second database~~, to~~ and then remove said output data from the second database ~~after~~ in response to said transmission of said output data; (4) to periodically obtain the input data from the first database, (5) to store the periodically obtained input data in the second database, and (6) to transmit at least a portion of the periodically obtained input data required by one of the gaming machines to keep said one gaming machine operational from the second database to said one gaming machine without accessing the first database, said programmed hardware being configured to perform said processes (1) to (6) without command from the central authority.

2. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the network comprises a first network arranged to transmit data between the gaming machines and the second database and a second network arranged to transmit data between the second database and the first database.

3. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a first processor arranged to manage the first database and a second processor arranged to manage the second database.

4. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the gaming machines comprise meters arranged to store meter data and wherein the output data comprises the meter data.

5. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 4 wherein the input data comprises meter data for gaming machines played within a predetermined preceding time period.

6. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the gaming machines are responsive to a card bearing an identification code and wherein the input data comprises credit balances addressable in response to the identification code.

7. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 6 wherein the second database stores the credit balances.

8. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the gaming machines generate tickets bearing validation codes from which ticket values may be obtained and wherein the input data comprises the ticket values.

9. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 8 wherein the ticket values are stored in the second database.

10. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the gaming machines comprise jackpot meters arranged to store jackpot data and wherein the output data comprises the jackpot data.

11. – 20. (Canceled)

21. (Currently Amended) In a gaming system comprising a plurality of gaming machines and a first database located in a central authority and arranged to store (i) input data to be sent to one or more of said plurality of gaming machines to keep said one or more gaming machines operational and (ii) output data generated by said plurality of gaming machines, a method of providing data storage and communications between the gaming machines and the first database comprising:

(1) polling the gaming machines to obtain the output data;

(2) storing the output data apart from the first database;

(3) transmitting the output data stored apart from the first database to the first database[[;]] and then removing the output data stored apart from the first database ~~after~~ in response to said transmission of the output data;

(4) periodically obtaining the input data from the first database;

(5) storing the periodically obtained input data apart from the first database; and

(6) ~~requiring transmission of~~ transmitting at least a portion of the periodically obtained input data stored apart from the first database to one of the gaming machines ~~to keep~~ and keeping the one gaming machine operational without accessing the first database,

wherein said steps (1) to (6) are performed without command from the central authority.

22. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 21 wherein the gaming machines comprise meters arranged to store meter data and wherein the output data comprises the meter data.

23. (Previously Presented)The method of claim 22 wherein the input data comprises stored meter data for gaming machines played within a predetermined preceding time period.

24. (Previously presented) The method of claim 21 wherein the input data comprises credit balances stored in the first database; wherein storing the periodically obtained input data apart from the first database comprises storing the credit balances periodically obtained from the first database apart from the first database; and wherein transmitting at least a portion of the periodically obtained input data stored apart from the first database to the one gaming machine comprises reading at the one gaming machine an identification code, addressing one of the credit balances in response to the identification code, and transmitting the one credit balance periodically obtained from the first database and stored apart from the first database to the one gaming machine.

25. (Previously presented) The method of claim 21 wherein the input data comprises ticket values stored in the first database, the ticket values being addressable in response to validation codes, wherein storing the periodically obtained input data apart from the first database comprises storing the ticket values periodically obtained from the first database apart from the first database; and wherein transmitting at least a portion of the periodically obtained input data stored apart from the first database to the one gaming machine comprises generating a ticket bearing the validation code, reading the validation code from the ticket at the one gaming machine, addressing the ticket value periodically obtained from the first database and stored apart from the first database, and transmitting said addressed ticket value to the one gaming machine at which the validation code is read.

26. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 21 wherein the gaming machines comprise jackpot meters arranged to store jackpot data and wherein the output data comprises the jackpot data.

27. – 33. (Canceled)

34. (Currently Amended) In a gaming system comprising a plurality of gaming machines and a first database located in a central authority and arranged to store (i) input data to be sent to one or more of said plurality of gaming machines to keep said one or more gaming machines operational and (ii) output data generated by said plurality of gaming machines, a

method of providing data storage and communications between the gaming machines and the first database comprising:

(1) dividing the gaming machines into a first group and a second group;

(2) polling the gaming machines in the first group to obtain first output data;

(3) storing the first output data apart from the first database;

(4) transmitting the stored first output data to the first database[[;]] and then removing the first output data stored apart from the first database ~~after~~ in response to said transmission of the stored first output data;

(5) polling the gaming machines in the second group to obtain second output data;

(6) storing the second output data apart from the first database and apart from the first output data;

(7) transmitting the stored second output data to the first database[[;]] and then removing the second output data stored apart from the first database ~~after~~ in response to said transmission of the stored second output data;

(8) periodically obtaining from the first database first input data for use in the first group of gaming machines;

(9) storing the periodically obtained first input data apart from the first database;

(10) transmitting at least a portion of the periodically obtained first input data stored apart from the first database to one of the first group of gaming machines without accessing the first database when said at least a portion of the periodically obtained first input data are required by said one of the first group of gaming machines ~~to keep~~ and keeping said one of the first group of gaming machines operational;

(11) periodically obtaining from the first database second input data for use in the second group of gaming machines;

(12) storing the periodically obtained second input data apart from the first database and apart from the first input data; and

(13) transmitting at least a portion of the periodically obtained second input data stored apart from the first database and apart from the first input data to one of the second group of gaming machines without accessing the first database when said at least a portion of the periodically obtained second input data are required by said one of the second group of gaming machines ~~to keep~~ and keeping said one of the second group of gaming machines operational.

wherein said steps (1) to (13) are performed without command from the central authority.

35. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34 wherein the gaming machines comprise meters arranged to store meter data and wherein the first output data and second output data each comprises a portion of the meter data.

36. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34 wherein the first input data and second input data each comprises stored meter data for gaming machines played within a predetermined preceding time period.

37. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34 wherein the gaming machines comprise jackpot meters arranged to store jackpot data and wherein the first output data and second output data each comprises a portion of the jackpot data.

38. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34 wherein the periodically obtained first input data comprises first credit balances; wherein the periodically obtained second input data comprises second credit balances; wherein storing the periodically obtained first input data apart from the first database comprises storing the first credit balances periodically obtained from the first database apart from the first database; wherein transmitting at least a portion of the periodically obtained first input data stored apart from the first database to said one of the first group of gaming machines comprises reading at said one of the first group of gaming machines a first identification code, addressing one of the first credit balances periodically obtained from the first database and stored apart from the first database in response to the first identification code, and transmitting said one first credit balance to said one of the first group of gaming machines without accessing the first database; wherein storing the periodically obtained second input data apart from the first database and apart from the first input data comprises storing the second credit balances periodically obtained from the first database apart from the first database and apart from the first credit balances; and wherein transmitting at least a portion of the periodically obtained second input data stored apart from the first database and apart from the first input data to said one of the second group of gaming machines comprises reading at said one of the second group of gaming machines a second identification code, addressing one of the second credit

balances periodically obtained from the first database and stored apart from the first database and apart from the first credit balances in response to the second identification code, and transmitting ~~the~~ said one second credit balance to said one of the second group of gaming machines.

39. (Previously presented) The method of claim 34 wherein the periodically obtained first input data comprises first ticket values periodically obtained from the first database, the first ticket values being addressable in response to first validation codes, wherein storing the periodically obtained first input data apart from the first database comprises storing the first ticket values periodically obtained from the first database apart from the first database; and wherein transmitting at least a portion of the periodically obtained first input data stored apart from the first database to said one of the first group of gaming machines comprises generating at a first one of the plurality of gaming machines a first ticket bearing one of the first validation codes, reading the one first validation code from the ticket at said one of the first group of gaming machines, addressing one of the first ticket values periodically obtained from the first database and stored apart from the first database in response to the one first validation code, and transmitting said one first ticket value to said one of the first group of gaming machines at which the one first validation code is read.